

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the above amendments is courteously solicited.

The Examiner in his office action dated December 8, 2003 indicated the subject matter of claims 16, 17, 19, 23 and 24 as being allowable. Applicants by the instant amendment have rewritten dependent claim 16 in independent form as amended independent claim 12. In addition, Applicants have rewritten dependent claim 19 in independent form as amended independent claim 18. In addition, the instant amendment adds new dependent claims 28-33 which are dependent on amended claim 12 and new dependent claims 34-39 which are dependent on amended claim 18. In light of the foregoing, all of the claims as pending in the instant application now depend either directly or indirectly from one of independent claims 12 and 18. Accordingly, the instant application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the

Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as amended herein patentably define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,

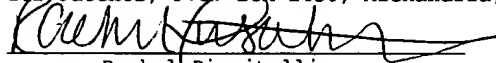
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on March 4, 2004.


Rachel Piscitelli